

# THE PERRYSBURG JOURNAL.

BY S. CLARK.]

"Agriculture, Commerce, Manufactures."

[\$1.50 IN ADVANCE.]

VOL. 2.

PERRYSBURG, WOOD COUNTY, OHIO, SATURDAY, JUNE 17, 1854.

NO. 15.

## The Boy Heroes. A Sketch of Early Western Life.

When Kentucky was an infant State, and before the foot of civilization had trodden her giant forests, there lived on a branch of the Green river, an old hunter by the name of John Slater. His hut was upon the Southern bank of the stream, and save a small patch of some dozen acres that had been cleared by his own axe, he was shut up by dense forests. Slater had two children at home with him—two sons, Philip and Daniel—the former fourteen and the latter twelve years of age. His elder children had gone South. His wife was with him, but she had been for several years an almost helpless cripple from the effects of severe rheumatism.

It was early in the spring, and the old hunter had just returned from Columbia, where he had been to carry the produce of the winter's labor, which consisted mostly of furs. He had received quite a sum of money, and had brought it home with him. The old man had for several years been accumulating money, for civilization was gradually approaching him, and he meant that his children should start on fair terms with the world.

One evening, just as the family were sitting down to their frugal supper, they were attracted by the sudden howling of the dogs, and as Slater went to the door to see what was the matter, he saw three men approaching his hut.

He quickly quieted the dogs, and the strangers approached the door. They asked for something to eat, and also for lodgings for the night. John Slater was not the man to refuse a request of that kind, and he asked the strangers in. They set their rifles behind the door, unslung their packs, and room was made for them at the supper table. They represented themselves as travelers bound farther West, intending to cross the Mississippi in search of a settlement.

The new comers were far from being agreeable or prepossessing in their looks, but Slater took no notice of the circumstance, for he was not one to doubt any man. The boys, however, did not like their appearance at all, and quick glances which they gave each other told their feelings. The hunter's wife was not at the table, but she sat in her great easy chair by the fire.

Slater entered into conversation with the guests, but they were not very free, and after a while the talk dwindled to occasional questions. Philip, the elder of the two boys, noticed that the men cast uneasy glances about the room, and he watched them narrowly. His fears had become excited, and he could not rest. He knew that his father had a large sum of money in the house, and his first thought was that these men were there for the purpose of robbery.

After the supper was over, the boys quickly cleared off the table, and then went out of doors. It had become dark, or rather the night had fairly set in, for there was a bright moon, two-thirds full, shining down upon the forest.

"Daniel," said Philip, in a low whisper, at the same time casting a look over his shoulder, "what do you think of these 'ere men?"

"I'm afraid they're bad ones," returned the younger boy.

"So am I. I believe they mean to steal father's money. Didn't you notice how they looked around?"

"Yes."

"So did I. If we should tell father what we think, he would only laugh at us, and tell us we were perfect scare-crows."

"But we can watch 'em."

"Yes, we will watch 'em, but do not let them know it."

The boys held some further consultation, and then going to the dog-house, they set the small door back, so that the hounds might spring forth if they were wanted. If they had desired to speak with their father about their suspicions, they had no chance, for

the strangers sat close by him all the evening.

At length, however, the old man signified his intention of retiring, and arose to go out of doors, to see the state of affairs without. The three followed him, but they did not take their weapons! The old lady was asleep in the chair.

"Now," whispered Philip, "let's take two of father's rifles up to our bed,—we may want them. We are as good as men with the rifle."

Daniel sprang to obey, and quickly as possible the boys slipped two rifles from their pockets behind the great stove chimney, and then hastened back and emptied the priming from the stranger's rifles, and when their father and the strangers returned, they had resumed their seats.

The hunter's cabin was divided into two apartments on the ground floor, one of them in the end of the building being the old man's sleeping room, in which the company at present sat. Overhead there was a sort of scaffolding, reaching only half-way over the large room below it, and in the opposite end of the building from the little sleeping apartment of the hunter. A rough ladder led up to the scaffold, and on it, close up to the gable end, was the boys' bed. There was no partition at the edge of this scaffolding, but it was all open to the room below.

Spare bedding was spread upon the floor of the kitchen for the three travelers, and after everything had been arranged for their comfort, the boys went up to their bed, and the old man retired to his little room.

The boys thought not of sleep, or if they did it was only to avoid it. Half an hour had passed away, and they could hear their father snore. Then they heard a movement from those below. Philip crawled silently to where he could peep down through a crack, and saw one of the men open his pack, from which he took several pieces of raw meat by the rays of the moon, and moving towards the window, he shoved the sash back and threw the pieces of flesh to the dogs. Then he went back to his bed and laid down.

At first the boy thought that this might be thrown to the dogs only to distract their attention; but when the man laid down, the idea of poison flashed through Philip's mind. He whispered his thoughts to his brother. The first impulse of little Daniel as he heard that his poor dogs were to be poisoned, was to cry out, but a sudden pressure from the hand of his brother kept him silent.

At the end of the boys' bed there was a dark window, a small square door, and as it was directly over the dogs' house, Philip resolved to go down and save the dogs. The undertaking was a dangerous one; for the least noise would arouse the villains—and the consequence might be fatal. But Philip Slater found himself strong in heart, and he determined upon the trial. His father's life might be in his hands! This thought was a tower of strength in itself.

Philip opened the window without moving from the bed, and it swung upon its leather hinges without noise. Then he threw off the sheet and tied the corner of it to the staple by which the window was hooked. The sheet was then lowered on the outside, and carefully the brave boy let himself out upon it. He enjoined his brother not to move, and then he slid noiselessly down. The hounds had just found the meat, and they drew back at their young master's beck, and Philip gathered the flesh all up. He easily quieted the faithful brutes, and then he quickly tied the meat up in the sheet. There was a light ladder standing near the dog house, and setting this up against the building, Philip made his way back to his little loft, and when once safely there he pulled the sheet in after him.

The strangers had not been aroused, and with a beating heart the boy thanked God. He had performed an act, simple as it may appear, at which many a stout heart would

have quailed. The dogs growled as they went back into their kennel, and if the strangers heard them, they thought the poor animals were growling over the repast they had found.

At length the hounds ceased their noise, and all was quiet. An hour passed away, and so did another. It must have been nearly midnight when the men moved again, and the lad Philip saw the rays of a candle flash up through the cracks of the floor on which stood his bed. He would have moved to the crack where he could peep down, but at that moment he heard a man upon the ladder. He uttered a quick whisper to his brother, and they lay perfectly still. The man came to the top of the ladder, and held his light up so he could look upon the boys. The fellow seemed to be perfectly satisfied that they were asleep, for he soon returned to the ground floor, and then Philip crept to the crack. He saw the men take knives, and heard them whispering.

"We'll kill the old man and woman first," said one of them, "and then we'll hunt the money. If those little brats up there (pointing to the scaffold) wake up, we can easily take care of them."

"But we must kill them all," said another of the villains.

"Yes," returned the speaker, "but not the young ones first; they may make a noise, and start the old man up."

Philip's heart beat with horror.

"Down the ladder outside! quick!" he whispered to his brother. "Down and start up the dogs! Run for the front door and throw it open—it isn't fastened! Oh, do let the dogs in the house as quick as you can! I'll look out for father while you go."

Daniel quickly crawled out through the little window, and Philip seized a rifle and crept to the head of the scaffold. Two of the villains were just approaching the door of his father's room. They had set the candle down on the floor, so that its light would fall into the bedroom as the door was opened. Philip drew the hammer of his rifle back, and rested the muzzle upon the edge of the boards. One of the men had his hand upon the latch. The boy-hero uttered a single word of heartfelt prayer, and pulled the trigger. The villain whose hand was upon the latch, uttered one sharp, quick cry, and then fell upon the floor. The bullet had passed through his brain.

For an instant the two remaining villains were confounded, but they quickly comprehended the nature and position of their enemy, and sprang for the ladder. They did not reach it, however, for at that instant the outer door was flung open and the hounds—four in number—sprang into the house. With a deep, wild yell, the animals leaped upon the villains, and they had drawn them upon the floor just as the old hunter came from his room. "Help us! help us! father," cried Philip as he hurried down the ladder, "I've shot one of them! They are murderers! robbers! Hold 'em! hold 'em!" the boy continued, clapping his hands to the dogs. Old Slater comprehended the nature of the scene in a moment and sprang to the spot where the hounds had the two men upon the floor. The villains had both lost their knives, and the dogs had so wounded them that they were incapable of resistance. With much difficulty the animals were called off, and then the two men were lifted to a seat. There was no need of binding them, for they needed some more restorative agent, as the dogs had made quick work in disabling them.

After they had been looked to, the old man cast his eyes about the room. They rested a moment upon the body of him who had been shot, and then turned upon the boys.—Philip told him all that had happened. It seemed some time before the old hunter could crowd the whole teeming truth through his mind; but as he gradually comprehended it all, a soft, grateful, proud light broke over his features, and he held his arms out to his sons.

"Noble, noble boys!" he uttered, as he clasped them to his bosom. "God bless you for this! Oh, I dreamed not that you had such hearts."

For a long time the old man gazed on his boys in silence; while tears of love and gratitude rolled down his cheeks, and his face was lighted up with the most joyous holy pride.

Long before daylight, Philip mounted the horse and started for the nearest settlement, and early in the forenoon the officers of justice had the two wounded men in charge, while the body of the third was removed.—They were recognized by the officers as criminals of notoriety; but this was their last adventure, for the justice they had so long outraged fell upon them and stopped them in their career.

Should any of our readers chance to pass down the Ohio river, I beg they would take notice of a large white mansion that stands upon the southern bank, with a wide forest park in front of it, and situated some eight miles west of Owensboro'. Ask your steamboat captain who lives there, and he will tell you, "Philip Slater & Brother, retired flour merchants." They are the Boy Heroes of whom I have been writing.

**BOILING EGGS, AND MAKING TEA ON HIGH ELEVATIONS.**—The deep narrow valleys and ravines which slope down from the elevated plateau of Erzeroum, are unhealthy and pestilential in the extreme, while the inhabitants of the upper country enjoy good health enough. Here the corn returns about five fold to the labor of the sower; one being retained for seed, four bushels is the extent of the profit of the husbandman for one which he had sown. The summer, though very short, is hot and parching, the thermometer being usually at 84, though it rises occasionally, I think to nearly 90. The cold in winter is commonly 16 degrees below zero of Fahrenheit, and is often colder. The mercury in my thermometer, which was not calculated for such a climate, quietly retired into the ball in the autumn, and never came out again while I remained at Erzeroum.—The great height of the town above the sea was exemplified in a practical manner to me on my first arrival. I was in a state of constant wrath about the tea; the tea was excellent, of the very first quality, but the decoction thereof was always a failure. In vain was the kettle placed on the fire by my side; in vain did the semavar, the best of tea-urns, boil and steam. Double, double, toil and trouble! the fire burned, and the cauldron bubbled, but the tea was vapid.—As for eggs, I don't know how long it took to boil them till the white was fixed. The reason of all this occurred to me one day when I put my finger into some almost boiling water, which by no means scalded me—for water boiled at 106 degrees of Fahrenheit, as we were between 7,000 and 8,000 feet above the level of the sea; and consequently, though boiling and steaming away, it was not hot enough to produce the effects of water boiling at the heat of 212 degrees, which is the temperature at which it boils in London.—[Armenia, by the Hon. R. Curzon.]

The Agriculturist, after much observation and experience, says it has come to the conclusion that the least distance apart from each other, at which trees should be set out, is as follows: Apples 33 feet, or two rods—forty feet is none too far; pears, on their own stocks, 24 to 30 feet; pears, on quince stocks, 10 to 12 feet; quinces, peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums, 16 to 20 feet.

**SENSIBLE LAW.**—The following has been passed by the Massachusetts legislature, with a view to the preservation of public health: "If any person shall kill, for the purpose of sale, any calf less than four weeks old, or shall knowingly sell the meat of any calf killed when less than four weeks old, such person shall be punished by a fine not exceeding \$200."